

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 443 786

SP 039 335

AUTHOR Suleiman, Mahmoud F.
TITLE Standards-Based Induction Programs: Implications for Teacher Training and Support.
PUB DATE 2000-03-00
NOTE 11p.; Portions of this paper were presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Social Science Association (Las Vegas, NV, March 26-28, 2000).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Standards; *Beginning Teacher Induction; *Beginning Teachers; Consciousness Raising; Cultural Pluralism; Diversity (Student); Elementary Secondary Education; *Faculty Development; *Field Experience Programs; Higher Education; Preservice Teacher Education; State Standards; Teacher Recruitment; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS California

ABSTRACT

This paper describes teacher professional development through field-based education within the expected standards of the teaching profession, drawing from research and experience with current trends and practices in teacher education and student learning. Today's teachers must be prepared to play a more vital role in diverse 21st-century schools. Teacher education programs have been experimenting with new approaches to induction in order to foster teacher support and retention. Several initiatives have evolved in California to retain and better prepare teachers. This includes the state-sponsored Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment induction program and the California Formative Assessment and Support System for Teachers. Teacher education programs foster tolerance of diversity and cultural pluralism among teachers. Field-based education offers opportunities for this type of consciousness raising. Other benefits of field-based education include: opportunities for classroom observations; experiences with the dynamics of teaching and learning; insights about various aspects that affect teaching; and application of conceptual knowledge through inquiry-based teaching. Successful field experiences and induction programs should include such features as: concrete learning opportunities and field experiences; positive social and professional ambience via reflective discourse; and solid partnerships through collaborative efforts to improve programs. (Contains 17 references.) (SM)

Standards-Based Induction Programs: Implications for Teacher Training and Support

Mahmoud F. Suleiman, Ph.D.
Teacher Education Department
California State University, Bakersfield
Bakersfield, CA 93311

Tel. (661) 664-3032

Fax (661) 664-2199

E-mail: msuleiman@csub.edu

*Portions of this paper were presented at the National Social Science Association Conference, March 26-28, Las Vegas, ND
©2000, Suleiman*

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

M.F. Suleiman

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- ☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

STANDARDS-BASED INDUCTION PROGRAMS: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER TRAINING AND SUPPORT

by

Mahmoud Suleiman

California State University, Bakersfield

Introduction

The growing trends toward standard based practice have made many traditional teacher preparation programs shift from traditional approaches to field based practices. Such shift is necessary to inculcate professional skills and values in teachers and other participants in schools. For this reason, standards have emerged as a framework to ensure that learning outcomes are met. The field based educational opportunities for preservice teachers have always been fruitful in better preparing professionals in all walks of life including education. Based on this approach, many states now are implementing induction field-based programs for beginning teachers to serve participants who completed a traditional non-field based teacher education program. For instance, in the state of California, such programs as Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) and California Formative Assessment and Support System for Teachers (CFASST) have been gaining momentum locally and nationally. These tested-and-proven standard driven teacher education programs have resulted in dramatic increase in teacher retention. They also have augmented a better understanding of the teaching profession especially the role of teachers as leaders in the diverse society. This paper describes professional teacher development through field based education opportunities within the expected standards of the teaching profession. It draws from research and experience about current trends and practices in teacher education and student learning. It also highlights the benefits of induction programs and their implications for preparing teachers for the 21st century pluralistic schools.

Teacher Education Revisited: An Overview

Given the limitations of traditional teacher education programs, it is important to prepare teachers who can play a more vital role in the 21 century diverse schools. The newly reinvented teacher preparation programs actively engage preservice teachers in the culture of schools through a

four-year program during which students are exposed to various educational settings. They are also provided an opportunity to translate theory into practice through active engagement, reflection, and collaboration. Unlike the short-term traditional programs, induction programs offer a more realistic and experiential training that helps teachers experience first hand the dynamics of the classroom, and become more aware of the demands of the democratic learning/teaching contexts.

Traditionally, field based education of prospective and beginning teachers has emerged as a critical need to professionally prepare and retain teachers over the years. In fact, early field experiences are seen as the capstone of teacher preparation programs (Slick, 1995). The rationale for immersing prospective teachers in the school site has always been justified in terms of the gleaned social, educational and professional benefits. First, teacher education programs aim to prepare teachers who will teach in schools that reflect the societal changes and achieve the desired learning outcomes in all students. According to Hopkins (1995), previous teacher education tried to respond to the complex societal changes that affect schools through field experiences. Hopkins (1995) notes that previous field experience approaches "originated with a concern that initial field experiences were occurring too late in the program" (p. 2). This led many to reconsider late immersion of student teachers in the field and encourage early immersion instead. Accordingly, integrating field experiences in the introductory phase of the participants' education is seen as a contributing factor to the professional development of students (Applegate, 1985; Sunal, 1980). Furthermore, longevity in the field has a larger impact on acquiring necessary conceptual knowledge and professional skills. During field time, participants engage in real-life learning activities such as reflection, inquiry, planning, teaching, collaboration, and other relevant competency-related tasks (Denton, 1982; Hill, 1986; Roe, Ross, & Burns, 1989; Hopkins, 1995).

Normally, professional and content standards are the guiding blueprint for the operation of field based induction programs. Thus, the scope of extensive knowledge required for successful field experiences must not be undermined. In fact, the scope and sequence for teacher preparation at universities and colleges have been prodded by accreditation agencies guidelines at the state and national levels. For example, the NCATE guidelines provide a structure and contingency for an extensive educational vision to link theory to practice. Such accreditation agencies as well as licenser guidelines provide an impetus to rethink the way field-based teacher education programs operate (Lange, 1995). Consequently, a more pragmatic approach to teacher education has emerged. This approach, deeply influenced by Goodlad's (1990) conceptual framework, is multi-

dimensional in nature and encompasses the knowledge base and competency learning to bridge the gap between theory and practice as well as cultivate the pluralism in schools within democratic principles.

Still, for a more a pragmatic approach to teacher education, participants at all levels (community, university, school, state. . .etc.) should be involved in educating teachers for the 21st century schools. Unless multiple professional development opportunities are available, prospective teachers will continue to lack essential proficiencies, competencies, skills, attitudes and motivations to stay in teaching.

Realistic expectations to deal with current and future needs of teachers and their students have been outlined through professional standards. Since preparing teachers for licenser, as well as creating "well-rounded" professionals, require restructuring and reorienting various responsibilities (Lange, 1995; Lange, 1990), teacher education programs have been experimenting with a new approach of induction to foster teacher support and retention. Such trends will be examined through the California approach—given its unique demographics and cultural fabric--to teacher education particularly the current efforts to support, retain, and assess beginning teachers.

Field Based Education: The California Context

Students coming to teacher education programs in California institutions of higher education are required to complete credential phases classes after they finish their liberal arts degree. Normally, they spend an average of one year completing foundations and methods education classes prior to applying for preliminary multiple subjects teaching credentials. Other state-mandated exams such as RICA (Reading Instruction Competence Assessment) must be completed as well.

It is worth noting that given the teacher shortage in California, many of prospective teachers are teaching on emergency basis, some of whom are part of an intern program. Another portion of the teaching force in California schools involves a sizable portion of out of state teachers who may vary in their credential status and licenser.

Under these circumstances, several State initiatives have evolved to retain, and better prepare teachers in California. Among many others, the state sponsored induction program called BTSA (Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment) and CFASST (California Formative Assessment and Support System for Teachers) have been very successful in meeting the school's

growing demands. This induction program is deeply rooted in field-based education and the notion of on-job-training for beginning teachers. Furthermore, as a standard driven program, it aims to prepare teachers to carry out their educational and professional duties in terms of the California Standards on the Teaching Profession (CSTP). Deeply rooted in research and experience, the standards are intricately linked to one another and address several avenues of teaching and learning. These standards are:

1. Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning
2. Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments for Student Learning
3. Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning
4. Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for All Students
5. Assessing Student Learning
6. Developing as a Professional Educator

Thus the context of teacher preparation in California requires that educational standards serve as a framework to help teachers create inclusive classrooms to promote learning of all students.

Standards: Toward a Comprehensive Framework

Since the growing diversity of society is largely reflected in the U.S. public schools and inevitably affect the educational treatments, any prescribed standards must be based on democratic pluralism. In particular, California is seen as a microcosm of the United States diverse society. Undoubtedly, educational reform efforts embodied in preparing teachers for the 21st. century require a drastic step in pluralizing teacher education so that prospective teachers, beginning teachers, and inservice teachers keep up with the evolving socio-educational demands in diverse schools.

Elsewhere, Suleiman (1999) argued that unless these participants are immersed in the realm of multiculturalism and its pedagogical practices that are conducive to the needs of diverse populations, most children will continue to be alienated and deprived of benefiting from multiple learning opportunities. In particular, since diverse classrooms pose a challenge for prospective teachers, teacher preparation programs should infuse multiculturalism in all avenues of learning/teaching situations to support both students and their teachers. This includes preparing all teachers and interns to become more competent in the ever-changing diverse global society. Thus, prospective teachers should be provided with the opportunity to utilize multicultural curricular

and teaching practices, incorporate relevant experiential activities that nourish enriching scientific knowledge, and harness the merits of diversity in today's increasingly multicultural classrooms.

As far as standards are concerned, they should be based on the premise and promise of multiculturalism. To integrate various multicultural aspects in teacher education programs, a number of guidelines that facilitate the fulfillment of the objectives of the democratic educational programs in diverse settings should be considered. Banks (1994) conceptualizes that multicultural education is multidimensional in nature; it consists of five interconnected dimensions: "(a) content integration, (b) the knowledge construction process, (c) prejudice reduction, (d) an equity pedagogy, and (e) an empowering school culture and social structure" (Banks, 1995, p. 4). One of the most fundamental dimensions of multicultural education is the knowledge construction process, because it relates to "the extent to which teachers help students to understand, investigate and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of references, perspective, and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed within it" (Banks, 1994, p. 5). These dimensions reflect a wide range of needs to support both learners and teachers in schools. Expected professional standards and content benchmarks should keep these dimensions in mind.

Whatever standards may be, these dimensions have important implications for both supporting student learning and enhancing teacher growth and development. It should be pointed out that a dynamic balance between these dimensions is necessary to empower all students and their teachers in diverse settings. Furthermore, understanding students' and teachers' characteristics, feelings, attitudes, and experiences can help the programs in attaining the desired educational goals (Nieto, 2000; Bennett, 1999). Most importantly, teachers and educators will to develop more democratic values and attitudes in themselves and their students so that they become more active participants in the pluralistic society.

Based on this approach, Suleiman (1998, 1999) suggests that teacher education programs should take into consideration the following guidelines:

1. Prospective teachers should be prepared to confront their prejudices and biases.
2. Prospective teachers should study the history of the American educational system from a multicultural pluralistic perspective.
3. Teachers should be prepared to become multicultural brokers in the pluralistic classroom.
4. Prospective teachers should be trained to be flexible in teaching.

Interestingly enough, several phases of induction programs revolve around developing such professional skills and abilities implied in these pillars. Also field based experiences seek to develop such knowledge and skill bases within the balance of cognitive and affective domains of learning and teaching. Such acquisition of relevant skills, knowledge, and attitudes can become more feasible through field-based opportunities.

Promises from the Field

Typically, the field is a true representation of the challenges and promises in teacher preparation. The real-life issues and concerns always arise about one's limitations and abilities when working in the field. In education, the field-based/internship activity is normally overseen by many participants (teachers, mentors, principals ...) whose main task is to help the intern gain insight into the dynamics of teaching and learning, understand the otherwise invisible aspects of the teaching profession, examine the subtle behaviours that affect learning/teaching outcomes, and promote knowledge and skill to develop as an effective professional. Other related aspects of field based (on-job-training) in education involve:

1. Conducting careful observation in classrooms;
2. Participating in the interactional process in the school culture;
3. Experiencing first hand the dynamics of learning and teaching;
4. Living through the unique realities of all learners;
5. Working with others from diverse backgrounds;
6. Gaining insight about various aspects that affect learning;
7. Developing knowledge and skill in translating reflection into action;
8. Utilizing various resources and materials to plan and teach;
9. Applying conceptual knowledge through inquiry-based teaching;
10. Meeting and exceeding prescribed educational and professional standards.

These tasks serve as goals to provide optimal learning opportunities for all students in schools. Most importantly, such field based education is rewarding especially in monitoring pace and progress of emerging professionals who learn how to pay close attention to minute details, holistically analyze teaching and learning behaviors, formatively evaluate professional growth, and reflectively assimilate innovative ideas into existing knowledge and skill.

The growing body of evidence about from the field provides an ample testimony to the gleaned benefits from field based education. Some of these include:

1. Providing multiple learning opportunities for professional growth and development;
2. Promoting an awareness about diverse learning/teaching contexts;
3. Fostering a more positive human relations and interpersonal skills among participants;
4. Bridging the gap between learning and teaching styles and meeting individual needs;
5. Encouraging collaboration, networking, communication, and team work skills;
6. Identifying with various students of special needs and circumstances;
7. Implementing workable classroom management skills and techniques;
8. Using inquiry, reflection, and action research to improve leaning and teaching;
9. Enhancing positive attitudes and motivations towards the teaching profession;
10. Developing more professional leadership roles through instructional tasks.

Both formative and evaluative assessments can be driven from these goals to address the participants' overall level of professional growth and development. The ability to adequately fulfill expected responsibilities, and the overall implementation of professional standards should be a guided process. Such guidance must be from within the context of schools. Thus, assessment and support should be implemented in terms of participants' ability to play the role of a mediating agent in the socialization and acculturation of *all* students into the school community; to utilize various resources and materials to promote desired learning and teaching outcomes; and to evaluate the progress of children by using several assessment techniques and measures.

Implications for Teacher Educators

Field experience approaches in teacher education programs, as grounded in research evidence, are based on the notion of effective "making" of prospective teachers. The structure of such program is composed of a network of individuals and institutions that work collaboratively to achieve the desired educational goals. Incoming interns in these programs have the advantage of being immersed in the realm of the educational field to experience first hand the demands of the learning/teaching situations.

Since the "teaching profession must attract some of the *best and brightest*" (Lange, 1995, p. 73), preparing teachers for the 21st century schools is by no means an easy task. As teachers need to become learning facilitators, their preparation in pedagogy and curriculum must take place using

alternative ways (Lange, 1995; Lange, 1990; Schubert, 1986). One alternative way prospective teachers can be "filtered" for this profession is through induction approaches in teacher education programs.

Field experiences are the threshold of successful recruitment of effective teachers who will ultimately carry out their professional duties in terms of the local and national standards.

In order to make field experiences and induction programs successful, teacher educators and program designers must keep the following ingredients in mind:

1. Enhance communication and networking through collaboration and partnerships;
2. Provide worthwhile concrete learning opportunities and experiences in the field;
3. Triangulate assessment in terms of the standards and multiple measures and tools;
3. Create a positive social and professional ambience through reflective discourse;
4. Implement flexible placement based on compatible personalities and skills;
5. Establish solid partnerships through collaborative efforts to improve programs.

Conclusion

Field based and induction programs seem to be the most logical response to the ever changing classrooms and growing challenges in today's schools. Standards require a more critical look at how students learn and how teachers can be trained. Field based education should be implemented throughout teacher preparation as a proactive approach to assessing and supporting professional growth and development. Demanding as it may be, field based education is eventually professionally rewarding in maximizing learning and teaching outcomes. As the benefits of such alternative approach have been outlined within a comprehensive framework, more and more teacher education programs are embracing induction and field based training for the 21st century schools.

References

- Applegate, J. H. (1985). Early field experiences: Three viewpoints. In M. Haberman & J. M. Backus (Eds.), *Advances in teacher education* (Vol. 3, pp. 75-93). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Banks, J. (1994). *An introduction to multicultural education*. Boston: Allen & Bacon.
- Banks, J. (1995). Multicultural education: Historical development, dimensions, and practice. In J. Banks & C. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education*. New York: Macmillan Publishing.

- Bennett, C. (1999). *Comprehensive multicultural education: Theory and practice* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Denton, J. (1982). Early field experience influence on performance in subsequent coursework. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 33(2), 19-23.
- Hill, S. E. (1986). Language education and field experiences. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 37(3), 56-59.
- Hopkins, S. (1995). Using the past; Guiding the future. In G. A. Slick (Ed.), *Emerging trends in teacher preparation: The future of field experiences*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Lange, D. L. (1995). Postbaccalaureate field experiences. In G. A. Slick, *Preparing new teachers: Operating successful field experience programs*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Lange, D. L. (1990). A blueprint for a teacher development program. In J. C. Richards & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Second language teacher education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Schubert, W. H. (1986). *Curriculum: Perspectives, paradigm, and possibility*. New York: Macmillan.
- Suleiman, M. (1999). Field experiences in diverse settings: Implications for teacher empowerment. *National Social Science Perspectives Journal*, 13(1), 153-160.
- Suleiman, M. (1998). TEAM-ing Together Through Field Experiences: Implications for Teacher Education. ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education.
- Sunal, D. (1980). Effects of field experiences during elementary methods courses on preservice teacher behavior. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 17(1), 17-23.
- Novak, J. M (Ed.). (1994). *Democratic teacher education: Programs, processes, problems, and prospects*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Roe, B. D., Ross, E. P., & Burns, P. C. (1989). *Student teaching and field experiences handbook* (2nd ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing Company.
- Slick, G. A (Ed.). (1995). *Emerging trends in teacher preparation: The future of field experiences*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Slick, G. A. (Ed.). (1995). *Preparing new teachers: Operating successful field experience programs*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.